

March 22, 2016

Mrs. Ruth Wong, Director
Brigadier General (Retired)
Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs
2615 South Grand Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90007

Dear Ruth:

The Quality and Productivity Commission was pleased to learn about the outstanding program enhancements your team has made to better serve all veterans during the Department Visit to Military and Veterans Affairs (MVA) on Monday, March 21, 2016. We are confident that a three-year, 17 percent salary increase for counselors, and two additional positions (supervisor and trainer) will improve productivity and expedite services to veterans.

Patriotic Hall and MVA counselors are vital points of contact for the brave men and women, who have served their country. Last year, counselors filed more than 16,000 claims to secure benefits for veterans, ranging from college fee waivers to section 8 housing assistance. The value of the claims exceeded \$31 million in federal benefits.

Commissioners were impressed with your successful legislative efforts, including the passage of SB296, which will provide a permanent source of funding for County Veterans Service Officers; and AB531. The latter bill created a Veteran designation on state driver's licenses, leading to more public awareness of and use of services targeting veterans.

Members of the Commission also commend notable quality and productivity improvements in the following areas:

- Establishment of a Military Reserve Leave Coordinator position to help resolve cases and avoid litigation
- Creation of a Culinary Arts Program in partnership with Los Angeles Trade Tech College, which has graduated 10 veterans
- Spearheading a home-based program for veterans unable to travel to one of MVA's 14 field offices

We support plain language

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***"To enrich lives through
effective and caring service"***

- Adoption of a digital-based Inventory Control Program, developed by the Auditor-Controller

We look forward to working with your Department to:

- Identify funding for a grant writer, and to purchase commercial equipment for the kitchen used by veterans in the Culinary Arts Program
- Collaborate with the State on training and certification of MVA counselors as a way to improve claims processing
- Support strategies to combat homelessness among veterans
- Expand outreach to women and other veterans; and to the LGBT community

Thank you for the opportunity to meet. We will continue to work with Productivity Managers Cynthia Lopez and Deborah Lin. Please contact Victoria Pipkin-Lane, Executive Director, at (213) 974-1361 for additional information.

Sincerely,



RODNEY C. GIBSON
Chair

RCG:VPL:LP

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